

Lake Hatchineha Watershed

Critical Natural Lands

Osceola, Polk

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2002
<i>Project Acres</i>	5,473
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	1,881
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	3,592
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$42,108,313

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Lake Hatchineha Watershed project will preserve a rare continuum of natural communities from the high scrub on the edge of the Central Ridge to marsh, floodplain, lakeshore and blackwater streams in the lowland areas. Approximately 4,778 acres in the project area would protect surface waters of the state. Approximately 777 acres of the project are groundwater recharge areas. Proposed additions to this project could eventually bring it to 11,300 acres, which would create a natural-area connection between two watersheds. This project's acquisition may also help complete the Florida National Scenic Trail, a statewide nonmotorized trail that crosses several Florida Forever project sites. The trail is a congressionally designated national scenic trail.

General Description

The Lake Hatchineha Watershed Project consists of three separate parcels of land on the Osceola-Polk County line, north and northwest of Lake Hatchineha, and west of Reedy Creek Swamp in Osceola County. The northernmost parcel, named the Beagle Tract, is 3,350 acres of mesic flatwoods, dome swamps and some pasture that straddles State Road 580. The southeastern parcel, 1,970 acres, is dominated by a 260-acre dome swamp surrounded by former mesic flatwoods that have been cut and then used for rangeland. The southwest parcel, 1,132 acres, is about three miles south of the Beagle parcel and it includes a high scrubby ridge about 100 feet above sea level, with sudden changes in elevation through the site. The general site is about five miles east of Haines City, and the eastern boundary of the southeastern parcel adjoins the Disney Wilderness Preserve in Osceola County.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Florida scrub-jay	G1G2/S1S2
Red-cockaded woodpecker	G3/S2
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2
<i>celestial lily</i>	G2/S2
Bald eagle	G5/S3
Osprey	G5/S3S4

Public Use

The project has the resource diversity to qualify as a WMA and may provide the public with many different recreational activities, including hunting, hiking, horseback riding, group and primitive camping, and cultural resource education. Other uses of the forest resources that may be compatible with management of this area include cattle grazing and apiaries.

Acquisition Planning

2002

The Lake Hatchineha Watershed project was added to the 2002 Florida Forever project list at the June 6, 2002 meeting of the ARC as a Group A project. This project is proposed for fee-simple ownership. The essential parcel has been identified as the Parker Poinciana ownership.

2003

On December 5, 2003, the ARC moved the project to the Group B list.

2010

On October 15, 2010, the ARC approved a 994-acre (\$158,208,631 just value) boundary reduction to the project boundary due to residential/commercial/infrastructure developments.

2011

On December 9, 2011, this project was placed in the Critical Natural Lands category of Florida Forever projects.

Coordination

TNC is considered an acquisition partner on this project. No alternative funding resources have been identified.

Management Policy Statement

Priority will be given to the conservation and protection of environmentally unique native habitats and threatened and endangered species. Management programs will be designed to conserve, protect, manage and/or restore important ecosystems, landscapes, forests, and water resources. The tract will also be managed to provide opportunities for hunting, camping, hiking, environmental and cultural resource education and other natural resource-based activity. Because one of the principal purposes of the proposal is water conservation, the FWC will cooperate with the SFWMD and other water-conservation agencies to achieve that purpose.



Manager(s)

FWC will manage the Lake Hatchineha Watershed Florida Forever project, in cooperation with other state and local agencies, including the SFWMD.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation

This project has the resource diversity to qualify as a WMA and would provide the public with a large tract for activities such as hunting, hiking and off-road bicycle trails, horseback riding, camping and wildlife observation.

Conditions affecting intensity of management

The primary management need of the Lake Hatchineha Watershed project to perpetuate the less-disturbed natural communities is to re-establish prescribed fires, and control human access. Some relatively small areas of xeric and mesic uplands have been converted to pasture or otherwise disturbed. Significant restoration is contemplated for some of these areas. Development of facilities, as on all wildlife management areas, would be kept to the minimum necessary to assure a high-quality recreation experience, and any such development would be confined to areas of previous disturbance.

Management implementation, Public access, Site security and Protection of infrastructure

During the first year after acquisition, emphasis will be placed on site security, posting boundaries, public access, fire management, resource inventory, control of exotic species, and removal of refuse. A conceptual management plan will be developed by FWC describing management goals and specific objectives necessary to implement future resource management.

Revenue-generating potential

Because very little of this project is appropriate for producing forest products, future revenue from timber resources will depend on successful reforestation and management of restored pasturelands and other disturbed areas. If managers' assessments indicate it would be appropriate, some revenues might be generated from grazing leases in flatwoods or pasture areas not restored. Additional revenue would be generated from sale of hunting licenses, fishing licenses, wildlife management area stamps and other special hunting stamps. Some revenues in the future might be realized from ecotourism activity, if such projects can be economically developed.

Cooperators in management activities

The cooperators in management activities on this project include the DRP and the SFWMD.

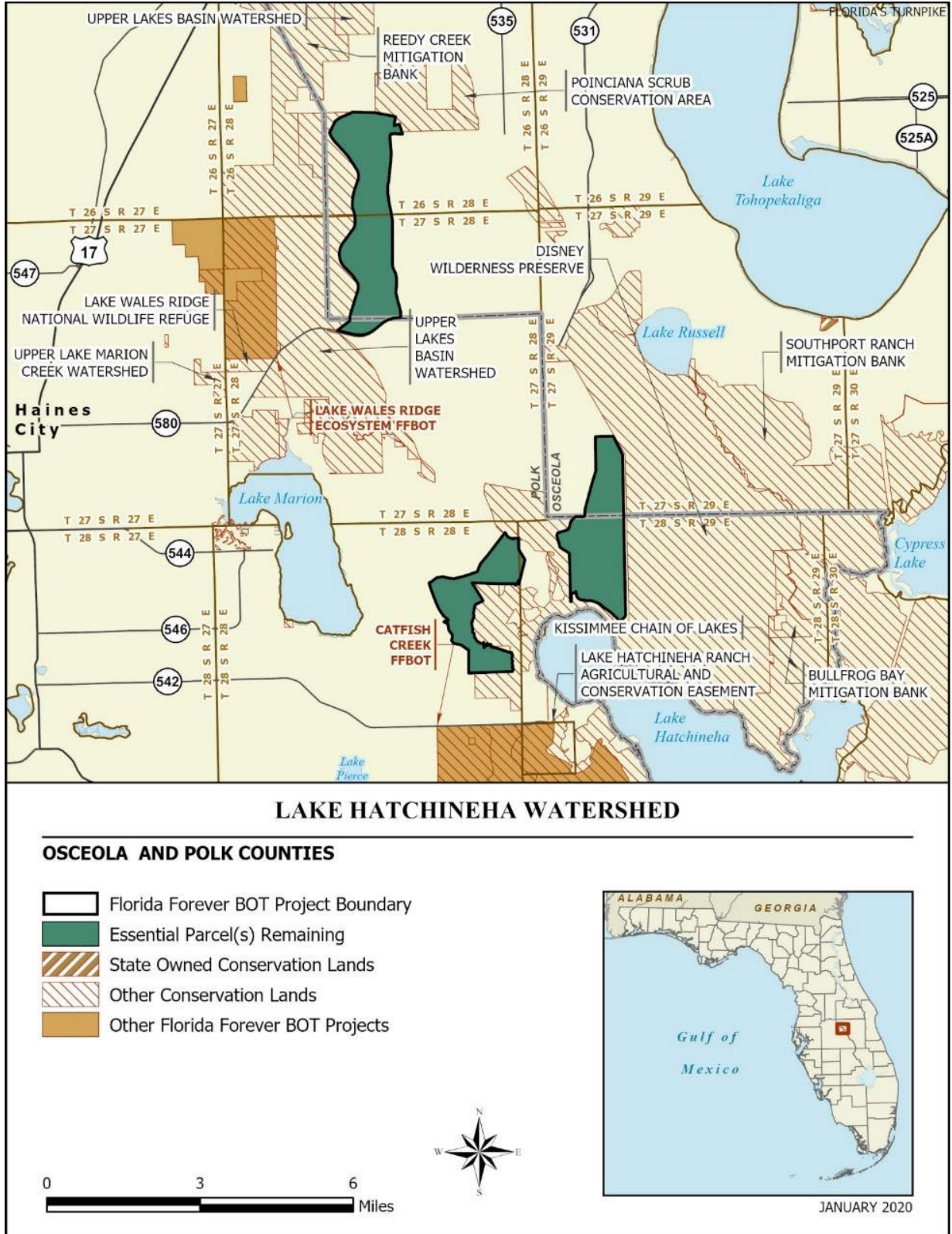


Management Cost Summary

<u>FWC</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
<u>Resource Management:</u>		
Exotic Species Control	\$25,748	\$51,496
Prescribed Burning	\$3,927	\$7,854
Hydrological Management	\$40,000	\$4,475
Other	\$52,991	\$52,991
Subtotal	\$122,666	\$116,816
<u>Administration:</u>		
Central Office/Headquarters	\$57,642	\$23,151
Districts/Regions	\$24,704	\$9,922
Subtotal	\$82,345	\$33,072
<u>Support:</u>		
Land Management Planning	\$25,000	\$0
Land Management Reviews	\$0	\$500
Training/Staff Development	\$0	\$1,000
Vehicle Purchase	\$83,900	\$11,986
Vehicle Operation/Maintenance	\$13,230	\$13,230
Subtotal	\$122,130	\$26,716
<u>Capital Improvements:</u>		
New Facility Construction	\$498,865	\$0
Facility Maintenance	\$0	\$47,481
Subtotal	\$498,865	\$0
<u>Visitor Services/Recreation:</u>		
Operations	\$1,625	\$178
Subtotal	\$1,625	\$178
<u>Law Enforcement</u>		
All Activities	\$4,506	\$4,506
TOTAL	\$832,137	\$228,768

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





Map 1: FNAI, January 2020